

**Department of Health
Office of the Secretary
Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (PHEPR)
2005 Highlights**

Washington Tribes and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) have made significant progress in initiating a collaborative effort to prepare for and respond to disasters and other public health emergencies.

The federal Department of Health and Human Services and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) authorized the use of a portion of the state bio-terrorism program funds for tribal preparedness activities. Over the past two years, DOH has collaborated with tribal representatives and organizations to seek their input on how to best accomplish this task. The following is an overview of the current status:

Number of new or existing contracts/grants

- DOH has contracted with 26 out of 29 federally recognized tribes within the state regarding Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (PHEPR) activities.
- DOH has been in close contact with the remaining three tribes that have not yet signed contracts. The department is in the process of addressing specific issues with each tribe to facilitate engagement in PHEPR activities.
- DOH has contracted with the American Indian Health Commission (AIHC) to act as the technical advisor to the department regarding tribal PHEPR activities.

Program or rule change, and how does it benefit

- The PHEPR program has reassigned staff to serve as a tribal liaison and dedicate more focus and time to address tribal PHEPR activities.

Meetings, Summits, Conferences, etc.

- In collaboration with the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB) and Northwest Center for Public Health Practice (NWCPHP), DOH held the 2nd Tribal Emergency Preparedness Conference in September 2005.
- During the conference, tribes recommended ways that the Department of Health could work more collaborative with tribes.
- DOH will take those important suggestions, comments and recommendations and develop a response and delivery plan that addresses those issues.

Region 1 Northwest Tribal Emergency Management Consortium (NWTEMC)

- Eight tribes located within the Region 1 Public Health Region; Lummi, Nooksack, Samish, Sauk-Suiattle, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, Tulalip and Upper Skagit Tribes have formed the Northwest Tribal Emergency Management Council (NWTEMC).
- The council was formed in response to the emergency preparedness funding received from the WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD) and DOH.
- This is a collaborative partnership among those tribes to address the federal requirements surrounding emergency preparedness.
- DOH is working with the NWTEMC to assist tribes address federal requirements and provide technical assistance.